

THE MILITANT

A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

INSIDE**Cuban Five: 'In Cuba, a prisoner is another human being'**

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VOL. 80/NO. 6 FEBRUARY 15, 2016

'Build a party to lead revolutionary struggle'

Paper showcases UK Communist candidate



Photo of Jonathan Silberman, Communist League candidate for mayor of London, accompanying article about the party in the Jan. 23 issue of *International Business Times*.

BY EMMA JOHNSON

"My objective isn't to push capitalism to the left or the right, my objective is to overthrow it," Jonathan Silberman, Communist League candidate in the May 5 elections for London mayor, told *International Business Times* Jan. 23.

"What is the point of the Communist League?" said Silberman in response to reporter Orlando Crowcroft. "It is to build a party that will lead a revolutionary struggle in this country. It exists to join the worldwide fight for socialism. There is no other reason."

The lengthy interview, titled "Viva!

Jonathan Silberman — Communist London Mayor Hopeful Dreams of Cuban Revolution in Britain," features a photo of him holding up a copy of the *Militant* while addressing a candidates' meeting. Crowcroft contrasts the long-time communist to followers of new Labour Party head Jeremy Corbyn, saying, "Silberman has no interest in making capitalism fairer — he wants to demolish it."

Crowcroft notes that as a factory worker Silberman "actually comes into contact with workers on a daily basis — unlike the massed ranks of

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Putin invokes czars, Stalin to justify Moscow's intervention in 'near abroad'

BY NAOMI CRAINE

In recent remarks, Russian President Vladimir Putin staked his claim to the legacy of both the czarist empire — the most reactionary in Europe until it was overthrown in 1917 — and the counterrevolutionary regime of Joseph Stalin. He denounced the revolutionary course led by communist leader V.I. Lenin of supporting the rights of oppressed nations to self-determination. Putin's statements are not a historical question. They aim to promote national chauvinism and justify Moscow's territorial and political claims to its "near abroad" today.

Lenin "planted an atomic bomb under the building that is called Russia, which later exploded," Putin declared at a Jan. 21 meeting of the Presidential Council for Science and Education. He expanded on this point at a Jan. 25 conference in southern Russia, saying he was referring to the debate "between Stalin and Lenin regarding the creation of the new state, the Soviet Union."

Putin blamed Lenin's insistence on a voluntary federation formed "on the basis of full equality with the possibility of seceding" for the 1991 coming apart of the USSR. He said the borders of the Soviet republics were "established arbitrarily, without much reason," leading to "nonsense" such as including the industrial, proletarian Donbass region in Ukraine, not Russia. This is the region where Moscow's forces have backed a separatist war against the government in Kiev for nearly two years now.

These remarks were given to a Russian Popular Front forum of pro-regime "civil society activists" in Stavropol. According to a transcript released by the Kremlin, Putin complimented the "efficient work" of officials in nearby Chechnya putting down nationalist struggles by the majority Muslim population there.

Ukrainian officials complained to the United Nations Security Council Jan. 27, saying that Putin's statements "publicly questioning the territorial

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Capitalist crisis fuels demand for change, turn to Sanders, Trump

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

The growing support for Bernie Sanders as the presidential primary voting begins is an indication of the depth of the social crisis of capitalism and the disarray it is causing within the main parties of U.S. imperialism. Sanders, who campaigns on the platform of the Occupy Wall Street movement, scored a virtual tie with Hillary Clinton in the Democratic Party caucuses in Iowa Feb. 1.

At the same time Donald Trump's campaign for the Republican nomination is not going away, despite coming in a close second to Ted Cruz, part of the "Tea Party" wing of the Republicans, in Iowa.

What gives wind to Trump and Sanders is the broad discontent and anger among workers and others fueled by years of smoldering depression conditions, in which jobs, wages and conditions of life have stagnated or worsened.

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FBI, state troopers kill Oregon occupier

BY SETH GALINSKY

Oregon State Police, backed by FBI cops including sharpshooters, shot and killed Arizona rancher Robert "LaVoy" Finicum Jan. 26. Finicum was a spokesperson for Ammon Bundy and others who had occupied the

Socialist Workers Party statement: 'Protest the killing of Robert Finicum' — p. 9

Malheur National Wildlife Refuge in eastern Oregon over demands for greater access to federal lands.

The FBI released a grainy aerial video that shows Finicum with his hands in the air. According to the FBI he "reaches his right hand toward a pocket" where they say he had a gun. Despite earlier reports that Finicum was "charging" at police, both the video and eyewitness accounts by two

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Washington-Moscow bloc in Syria hits hurdles with Assad's advances



Reuters/Khalil Ashawi

Destruction from Russian airstrikes in Maaret al-Numan, Idlib province, Syria, Jan. 12.

BY MAGGIE TROWE

Indirect negotiations on a Syrian cease-fire, with United Nations envoy Staffan de Mistura shuttling between Syrian government representatives and delegates from the Higher Negotiation Committee of opposition forces, began in Geneva Jan. 29 and were abruptly put on a "three-week pause" Feb. 3. Government troops, backed by hundreds of Russian bombing raids, made major advances against opposition forces north of Aleppo, the largest city in the country prior to the outbreak of the five-year civil war there.

De Mistura said he "needed immediate help from international backers led by the United States and Russia,"

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Steelworkers rally, protest ArcelorMittal's demands

Workers at Centers for Disease Control fight for contract

Communist League campaign

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the radical London left, content to cheer the revolution from posh North London cafes."

The article traces Silberman's political life. The son of Jews who fled Germany under Hitler, he became active in the fight against Washington's imperialist war against the workers and peasants of Vietnam. Silberman says, "That was when I realized I was a revolutionary."

The author notes Silberman's decades-long work in defense of the Cuban Revolution and his regular participation in the annual Havana International Book Fair, promoting Pathfinder Press books on revolutionary, working-class politics.

He points to Cuba's example for workers in the U.K. and worldwide, Crowcroft says, a sharp contrast to "the bloody authoritarian nightmare that the Soviet Union had become after Stalin."

"He hates that the mainstream and radical left who apologise for the anti-Semitism of terrorist groups such as Hezbollah and Hamas in their attempt to promote the Palestinian cause (which he believes in)," the article says. "He despises the reluctance of the British left to support the Maidan protests [in Ukraine] or the anti-Assad move-

ment in its efforts to oppose British intervention (which he also opposes)."

"Silberman spends the bulk of his Saturdays knocking on doors in working class housing estates," the article says, "and finds the respondents receptive."

"It doesn't matter if someone is Labour, Tory or Ukip," Silberman says. "It makes no difference to their interest in our politics. Supporting Ukip doesn't signify some big right wing ideology. I don't think that there is a massive anti-immigrant sentiment in the working class."

The communist candidate says workers are attracted to the campaign's proposals for the unions to unite native-born and immigrant workers in a common fight for better pay and working conditions.

"Why don't we fight for massive rise in the minimum wage that would benefit all workers?" Silberman says.

He "wants to build houses, schools and hospitals and put people to work," Crowcroft says. He wants to "fight anti-Semitism and Islamophobia at the same time."

The article ends with a reproduction of the front page of the Jan. 25 issue of the *Militant*.

Marchers in SF protest cop killing of Mario Woods



Militant/Carole Lesnick

SAN FRANCISCO — Hundreds of protesters marched through downtown here Jan. 30 demanding "Justice for Mario Woods," a 26-year-old Black man shot and killed by city police Dec. 2. Five cops — Winson Soto, Antonio Santos, Charles August, Nicholas Cuevas and Scott Phillips — surrounded Woods, who had been reported to cops as looking like a person involved in an earlier stabbing, and then shot him more than 15 times.

Woods family attorney John Burris made public a video of the killing.

Protesters carried signs reading, "Mario is our son" and "Fire Chief Suhr." Greg Suhr is head of the city police.

Police gripping batons blocked marchers from approaching Super Bowl City, a fan village for the upcoming NFL championship football game.

A hundred protesters eluded the cordon and set up a vigil inside the fenced-off area. This is "an important message for the world to see," Rhiannon Samson, who had come to visit Super Bowl City, told the *San Francisco Gate*.

— CAROLE LESNICK

Australia: Thousands march for rights of Aboriginal people

BY RON POULSEN

SYDNEY — Some 5,000 Aborigines and supporters of the rights of indigenous peoples marched here Jan. 26 to counter "Australia Day," a holiday established by the country's rulers to celebrate the date in 1788 when the first British convict colony was established.

This started a long frontier war against the indigenous peoples. Similar actions took place across the country, making these the largest protests for the rights of Aboriginal people in years.

Many marchers waved red, yellow and black Aboriginal flags. Others held signs saying, "White Australia has a Black history," "Stop Black deaths in custody," "No pride in genocide" and "Black lives matter!"

"People celebrate [Australia Day] when it's the beginning of the killing of our people, the loss of our language, of devastation and disease," said Ken Canning, of the Indigenous Social Justice Association, who chaired the rally.

Speakers told the history of the forced removal of Aboriginal children, known as the Stolen Generations. Between 1910 and 1970, the government forcibly removed thousands of indigenous youth

from their families. The children were either adopted by Caucasian families or institutionalized. Under Australia's racist assimilation policy, their names were changed, they were pressed to reject their culture and forbidden to speak their languages.

Speakers also protested "systemic" cop brutality against Aboriginal youth. "Too many police, never any justice!" chanted young people leading the march. Despite being only 4.2 percent of youth in Australia, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people make up over half the juvenile prison population.

The march culminated at Australian Hall, commemorating the Jan. 26, 1938, proclamation there by Aboriginal leaders of a Day of Mourning over the brutal colonial dispossession that had decimated the original population.

THE MILITANT

Defend Muslims against scapegoating, frame-ups

The capitalist rulers whip up hysteria about terrorism to scapegoat and frame up Muslims such as the Fort Dix Five in New Jersey, giving a green light to broader attacks on political rights. The 'Militant' explains why workers should join fights to defend mosques and Muslims.



Militant/Ruth Robinett
Firik Duka speaks out for Fort Dix Five, three of them his sons, Jan. 6 in New Jersey.

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FBI, troopers kill occupier

Continued from front page

women who were in the truck with him, on their way to a community meeting, tell a different story.

Shawna Cox, who was part of the occupation, and 18-year-old Victoria Sharp, who was going to sing at the meeting, both said Finicum left the vehicle seeking to draw police bullets away from it, yelling "shoot me" and telling officers he was on his way to meet with the sheriff in Grant County.

Both say the cops kept firing after Finicum hit the ground, and they then opened fire on the pickup, while the women and another passenger huddled on the floor.

"He was cornered like a helpless animal, with nowhere else to turn, and executed in cold blood," Finicum's family said in a statement Feb. 2. According to the family "he was shot multiple times in the back."

FBI Special Agent in Charge Greg Bretzing admitted no one provided Finicum medical assistance for "about 10 minutes" after he was shot.

Authorities so far have refused to disclose any further information, video or audio recordings — including one on Cox's phone — until their "investigation" is concluded, which they say could take six weeks.

Finicum, Bundy and other participants in the occupation of the Malheur refuge in Harney County were on their way to a meeting in John Day with ranchers, Grant County sheriff Glenn Palmer and others when they were intercepted. They were invited to speak on what many ranchers call the "overreach" of federal agencies that control more than half the land in the state, as well as the government's frame-up of area ranchers Dwight and Steven Hammond.

The father and son cattle ranchers

were sent back to prison Jan. 4 after having served their original sentences on trumped-up charges of arson. An appeals court ruled that the sentences violated federal minimums established under the 1996 Antiterrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act and ordered them back to prison to complete five years. The occupation of the refuge came on the heels of a Jan. 2 protest in Burns demanding freedom for the Hammonds.

While most area ranchers and workers are sympathetic to issues the occupiers raised, many wanted them to leave, fearing the FBI would respond with a murderous assault like the 1993 FBI attack on the Branch Davidian religious sect in Waco, Texas, that killed 86 people. The U.S. government arrested Bundy and 10 others connected to the occupation, charging them with "conspiracy to impede officers of the United States from discharging their official duties through the use of force, intimidation, or threats."

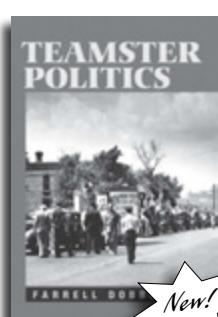
Lisa Hay, a lawyer defending Ryan Payne, who was shot in the wrist when the cops first stopped Finicum's truck, told the court Jan. 27, "The evidence against him is political speech and presence."

After the arrests, Bundy called on his supporters to end the occupation of the Malheur refuge. When four stayed behind, Bundy taped messages from jail asking them to leave. "This was never meant to be an armed standoff," he said Jan. 30. "Please do not make this something it was never meant to be."

Ranchers lives matter!

Competing demonstrations — one to denounce the killing of Finicum and one urging occupiers and others who have come from out of state to support

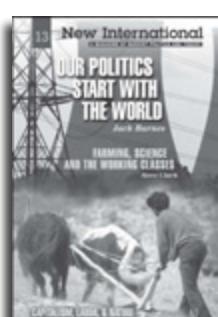
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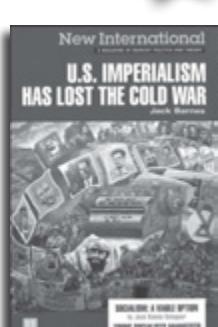
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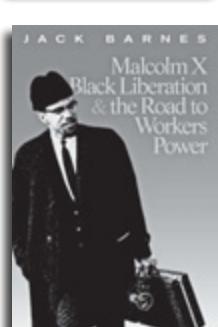
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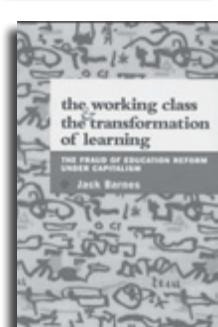
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California rally demands arrest of killer cop



Militant/Eric Simpson

PARADISE, Calif. — Protesters here continue to demand the arrest of cop Patrick Feaster who shot Andrew Thomas in the neck, severing his spinal cord, as he climbed out of his car following a wreck Nov. 25. The Jan. 9 rally, above, took place across the street from where Thomas was shot. Thomas' wife Darien Ehorn was thrown from the vehicle and died.

Instead of administering first aid to her, police video shows Feaster walk right past Ehorn as she lies in the street, pull his gun and shoot Thomas, who died of his wounds three weeks later.

Thomas' friends have organized a series of protests demanding Feaster be fired and charged. They also demand the recall of Butte County District Attorney Mike Ramsey for refusing to prosecute Feaster. Before Thomas died, Ramsey said he was going to charge him with drunk driving and vehicular manslaughter in the death of Ehorn.

"No officer should go up on an accident with their firearm drawn," Richelle Zuniga, rear/center with the bake sale sign, told the *Militant*. She knew Thomas growing up. "They are supposed to be there to help. The DA shouldn't be covering up for his officers."

The young protesters had organized a bake sale earlier that day to raise money for Thomas' funeral expenses.

— ERIC SIMPSON

them to go home — took place Feb. 1 in Burns. Harney County residents and ranchers joined on both sides.

Many took inspiration from Black Lives Matter protests against police killings nationwide, chanting "Hands up, don't shoot," and "Ranchers lives matter" and holding signs that said "All lives matter."

While some in the anti-occupation demonstration carried signs backing the sheriff and FBI, others crossed the street to express sympathy with those denouncing the killing of Finicum.

The Harney County Committee of Safety, made up of some local ranchers and other residents, said that it will continue to host public events and "re-focus on that which brought us to form this committee, the Hammonds: the case of Dwight and Steve, support to [their wives] Susie and Earlynna and pursuing legal processes to bring them justice."

In Harney County the capitalist economic crisis that has engulfed the United States and much of the world has been greatly exacerbated by federal rules and aggressive environmental regulations that played a role in destroying the lumber industry there and in hemming in or pushing ranchers off the land. The last lumber mill closed in 2008.

In 2012 well over 10 percent of the county's 7,100 people worked on ranches and farms. But federal government agencies, from the Bureau of Land Management to the Fish and Wildlife Service, often treat ranchers, especially smaller ranchers, as a hostile enemy.

Alan Schroeder, a lawyer for the Hammonds, told the *Militant* Feb. 1 that the family, with 600 mother cows, is dependent on federal land for about 50 to 60 percent of their grazing. "Maybe you could call them a medium size operation," Schroeder said. "They have one permanent employee and hire more

help when they harvest hay."

After they were framed up, the Bureau of Land Management vindictively revoked their grazing rights. "Two of their four grazing allotments have a significant amount of intermingling with private land," Schroeder said. "It's not economical to fence it off. So with the denial of the permits, they can't graze the cattle on their own land."

Bob Skinner, a cattle rancher in east Oregon's Jordan Valley, told the *Militant* he is involved in negotiations with the Bureau of Land Management to try to get the Hammonds' grazing allotment back. The occupation of the Malheur refuge set back efforts to reach a possible agreement on that, he said.

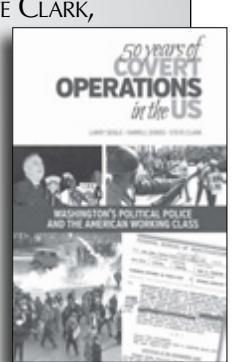
But, Skinner said, "If the Bundys hadn't done that, do you think anybody would even have heard about the Hammonds?"

50 Years of Covert Operations in the U.S.

Washington's Political Police and the American Working Class

BY LARRY SEIGLE, STEVE CLARK,
FARRELL DOBBS

The 15-year political campaign of the Socialist Workers Party to expose decades of spying and disruption by the FBI and other federal cop agencies targeting the party, other working-class organizations and other opponents of government policies. \$12



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Quebec unionists protest frame-up of rail workers

BY JOHN STEELE

LAC-MÉGANTIC, Quebec — The Canadian government continues to stall in its efforts to frame up locomotive engineer Tom Harding and train controller Richard Labrie, members of the United Steelworkers union, in two separate criminal cases against them. The charges stem from the July 6, 2013, derailment and explosion of a 72-car oil train here that killed 47 people, burned out the historic downtown area and poured millions of liters of toxic crude oil into the soil, lake and adjacent river.

A Jan. 28 hearing on charges laid by Transport Canada and Environment Canada against Harding, Labrie, the now-bankrupt Montreal, Maine and Atlantic Railway and five company bosses was abruptly cancelled and rescheduled for May 3.

Along with former Montreal, Maine and Atlantic Railway official Jean Demaire, the two rail workers already face life in prison on 47 counts of criminal negligence causing death, levied by the Quebec Crown Prosecutor. After many delays — including the prosecutor's extraordinary cancellation of a preliminary hearing where the defense could have learned the basis for the charges — the next court hearing is set for April 4.

"The prosecutor still refuses to reveal the basis for the charges against Harding and Labrie," Thomas Walsh, Tom Harding's lawyer, told the *Militant*.

Workers aren't guilty

"It is not the workers who caused this," Jacques Breton, a production worker at the Bestar furniture manufacturing plant and president of Bestar Unifor union Local 299, told the *Militant* Jan. 27. "The workers aren't guilty."

Breton is mayor of the village of Nantes. Like other supporters of Harding and Labrie, he is locked in an ongoing struggle with Transport Canada

and bosses of the tracks' new owner, the Central Maine and Quebec Railway, to enforce safe rail operation in the region.

"I don't understand how Transport Canada can say these are safe," he said as he displayed photos of the tracks behind his house. "They haven't replied to our request for information on the toxic chemicals the CMQR is currently transporting. The only way to deal with the railways is through popular mobilization."

He and other workers are demanding the federal government immediately halt all transport of toxic goods until repairs are made to tracks, culverts and other deteriorated parts of the rail system. They are fighting for Ottawa to build a rail bypass around Lac-Mégantic.

Federal Transport Minister Marc Garneau announced Jan. 30 that his office is conducting a "study" into the feasibility of moving the tracks. He also said John Giles, president of Central Maine and Quebec Railway, promised not to transport any crude oil through the city in 2016.

Because of government dispensation to protect the rail bosses' profits, Harding was the sole crew member the night of the explosion. He parked the train after his 12-hour shift and, with the lead engine running to power the air brakes, he set seven additional hand brakes and left to get some sleep.

Due to lack of company maintenance, a fire broke out on the engine during the night. Volunteer firefighters from Nantes, where the train was parked, eight miles from Lac-Mégantic, switched off the engine when they put



Above, Militant/John Studer

Above, contingent of relatives of people killed in 2013 oil train derailment and fire in Lac-Mégantic, Quebec, march for rail safety, Oct. 11, 2015. Inset, downtown Lac-Mégantic, destroyed by explosion that killed 47 people.

the fire out. When the dispatcher woke and informed him about the situation, Harding volunteered to go back and start another engine, company tapes of the phone call show. Go to sleep, the dispatcher said, the company has sent someone else. But they sent a track manager not trained on locomotives and he failed to start another engine. The air brakes bled out and the train rolled, crashed and exploded.

The Vancouver General Hospital local of the Hospital Employees Union voted Jan. 19 to back the framed-up rail workers and send \$350 to help pay for their legal expenses.

Contributions can be sent in Canada to Syndicat des Métallos, 565, boulevard Crémazie Est, bureau 5100, Montreal, QC H2M 2V8. In the U.S. checks can be sent to Tom Harding Defense Fund, First Niagara Bank, 25 McClellan Drive, Nassau, NY 12123.

Send solidarity messages to their union local, USW 1976 / Section locale 1976, 2360 De Lasalle, Suite 202, Montreal, QC H1V 2L1. Email: info@1976usw.ca. Copies should be sent to Thomas Walsh, 165 Rue Wellington N. Suite 310, Sherbrooke, QC Canada J1H 5B9. Email: thomaspwalsh@hotmail.com.

Canadian rail workers fight for safety on the job

BY KATY LEROUGETEL

CALGARY, Alberta — On Jan. 14 the Canadian Transport Ministry ordered Canadian Pacific Railway to immediately alter scheduling practices on some freight runs in British Columbia because they create "excessive fatigue" and pose "an immediate threat to safe railway operations."

The fight against unsafe conditions caused by overwork and inadequate rest was at the heart of a one-day nationwide Teamsters strike in February 2015 against Canadian Pacific by engineers, conductors and yardmen. Union officials called the strike off after one day and agreed to mediated arbitration when the government threatened back-to-work legislation. The arbitrated settlement was announced Dec. 8, but unsafe conditions persist.

"A major problem in our lives today is long hours," a Canadian Pacific engineer, who asked that his name not be used for fear of retaliation, told the *Militant* here Jan. 15. "The ruling doesn't fully address the issue. Twice a month, the arbitrator says, you have the opportunity to have two days off in a row. But the settlement didn't address going to work rested every day."

Some engineers and conductors must be available for work 12 hours a day, six days a week. "Say you get in at midnight," the engineer said. "You book your eight hours' rest till morning. But then you sit, waiting, say till midnight, when you're called. Now you've got to stay awake till noon the next day. And many crews work 70-

hour weeks."

The situation is made worse because bosses at both Canadian National Railway, Canada's largest rail carrier, and Canadian Pacific have laid off conductors and other workers in recent months due to the sharp decline of oil transport as the crisis in production and trade grows.

The company blames the union for any unsafe conditions. "CP has been taking steps to ensure crew members take more rest, but union collective agreements have been a barrier to change," management spokesman Martin Cej told CBC News.

Union fights for safety

Last year Canadian Pacific told the union it will be expanding use of remote control equipment on main tracks in seven areas, including Montreal, Calgary, Edmonton and Regina. The union calls for stricter regulation, saying it can be dangerous.

Train operation by rail workers using remote control belt packs to run locomotives while standing on the ground or riding another vehicle has been permitted by the Canadian government since the late 1980s. It is currently used mainly in rail yards to assemble trains.

U.S. rail bosses won the right to implement radio-controlled operation of crewless engines in 2001. The Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers called a strike, but the walkout was outlawed by a federal judge.

Four cars being moved by remote control derailed Dec. 8 in Canadian Pacific's Scotford Yard northeast of Edmonton, spilling almost 100,000 liters (26,000 gallons) of toxic styrene. The Transportation Safety Board says it is investigating the incident.

There were four other accidents involving radio-controlled train operation, in Scotford Yard, Calgary and Saskatoon, Doug Finnson, Teamsters Canada Rail Conference president, said in a Jan. 5 radio interview. "In Saskatoon, it was a 12,000-ton CN train. The operator couldn't stop it," he said.

Canadian Pacific wants to eliminate any limitation on its use of remote control operations on mainline track, Finnson said. "I think that's grossly irresponsible."

"We've already seen what can happen when a small operator can be allowed to cut corners in Quebec," he added, referring to the July 2013 oil train derailment and fire in Lac-Mégantic that killed 47 people.

Bosses on the Montreal, Maine and Atlantic, responsible for the disaster in Quebec, were boosters of radio-controlled engine operation, part of winning special government approval to run their oil trains with a single-person crew.

The Transportation Safety Board rejected Canadian National's proposal to train new employees as engineers, instead of requiring two years' experience, Finnson said. "But workers with less than two years experience are operating belt packs."

—CALENDAR—

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CALIFORNIA

Oakland

2016 Elections Reflect Working-Class Discontent. Speaker: Betsey Stone, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., Feb. 12. Dinner, 6 p.m.; program, 7:30 p.m. City of Refuge UCC, 8400 Enterprise Way. Tel.: (510) 686-1351.

CANADA

Calgary

"It's the Poor Who Face the Savagery of the U.S. 'Justice' System": The Cuban Five Talk About Their Lives Within the U.S. Working Class. Speaker: Katy LeRougetel, Communist League. Fri., Feb. 12, 7:30 p.m. 4909 17th Ave. SE. Tel.: (403) 457-9044.

Montreal

Race for U.S. President Officially Begins: What the Support for Trump and Sanders Reveals About the Class Struggle in the U.S. Today. Speaker: Beverly Bernardo, Communist League candidate in 2015 federal elections. Fri., Feb. 12, 7:30 p.m. 7107 St. Denis, Room 204. Tel.: (514) 272-5840.

—ON THE PICKET LINE—

MAGGIE TROWE, EDITOR

Help the *Militant* cover labor struggles across the country!

This column gives a voice to those engaged in battle and building solidarity today — including workers fighting for \$15 and a union; locked-out ATI Steelworkers; Verizon workers opposing concessions; construction workers demanding safe conditions. I invite those involved in workers' battles to contact me at 306 W. 37th St., 13th Floor, New York, NY 10018; or (212) 244-4899; or themilitant@mac.com. We'll work together to ensure your story is told.

— Maggie Trowe

Steelworkers rally, protest ArcelorMittal's demands

CHICAGO — “We jeopardize our health and safety every day on the job, and now the company wants to cut health care,” said ladle operator Christopher Turner, who was attending a Jan. 27 rally at ArcelorMittal’s headquarters here to oppose concessions demanded by the company. Some 100 United Steelworkers members who work at ArcelorMittal mills in northwest Indiana joined the protest.

More than 13,000 workers at company facilities in Indiana, Illinois, Ohio, Pennsylvania, West Virginia, Minnesota, South Carolina and Louisiana have been working under the contract that expired Sept. 1. The pact with U.S. Steel Corporation ended at the same time.

ArcelorMittal’s initial proposal included a three-year contract with no wage increase, a two-tier system of lower wages and benefits for new hires, major reductions in vacation pay and sickness and accident benefits, and reductions and increased costs in health care coverage for active and retired workers.

Just before Christmas the USW and U.S. Steel announced they had reached a tentative agreement. Union members are voting by mail, with the count to occur Feb. 1.

“Safety and retirees’ benefits are the big issues,” said electrician Carla Zabalydriga.

“Forty percent of current employees are eligible for retirement, so what the retirees get in the contract affects us all,” said USW Local 1010 training coordinator Don Siefert.

“What happens with the Big Steel contract will impact our upcoming contract,” said Jeff Tuinstra, financial secretary of Steelworkers Local 9777

at Maruichi Leavitt Pipe and Tube, who came to support the ArcelorMittal workers.

— Dan Fein and Alyson Kennedy

Atlanta workers at Centers for Disease Control fight for contract

ATLANTA — Some 100 unionists picketed in front of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention national headquarters here Jan. 26 supporting maintenance workers fighting for a union contract. The nearly 200 workers voted to join the International Union of Operating Engineers Local 926 in February 2015, but the contractor they work for, Four Seasons Environmental, has been trying to overturn the election and refuses to negotiate, in defiance of National Labor Relations Board rulings.

“We voted the union in because we needed a voice for our people,” electrician Lewis Mulligan, 43, told the *Militant*.

“We have no paid sick days, we need a better pension and higher wages,” said Darryl Huff. “I get no night differential.”

Wages start at \$12.22 an hour for landscapers and go up to \$22.57 for plumbers and pipe fitters. “Five years ago I was making \$32 an hour, said plumber Paul Hollifield, 62. “I had been against unions before, but I got involved when I saw that what was going on was wrong.”

Jackie Turner, one of several union supporters recently fired, told WRFG Radio that workers who need to enter the labs are not provided with proper personal protective equipment and have to wash their own clothes at home, risking contamination.

Members of the International Broth-



Militant/Dan Fein

Members of the United Steelworkers march Jan. 27 against ArcelorMittal’s concession contract demands in front of company headquarters in Chicago. Old contract expired Sept. 1, 2015.

erhood of Electrical Workers, United Food and Commercial Workers, International Association of Heat and Frost Insulators, and the Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union came in solidarity.

— Janice Lynn

NLRB: Walmart must reinstate workers fired for striking

LOS ANGELES — A National Labor Relations Board judge ruled Jan. 21 that Walmart unlawfully retaliated against employees who took part in 2013 strikes. The judge ordered the retail giant to reinstate 16 workers with back pay, remove from company files unlawful disciplines of other strikers and hold meetings at 29 stores to inform workers of their right to strike.

“This is a victory,” Evelin Cruz, who worked for 11 years at the Pico Rivera store near here until she was fired in 2014. She is one of the workers who received disciplinary actions the company must expunge. “It is important to go back and show you can organize and go on strike and have the right to speak out on our jobs.”

Jovani Gomez, fired from the Lakewood store for striking, was among those ordered reinstated. “Walmart workers have a right to stand together

for change without fear of being fired,” he said in a message sent to supporters.

The NLRB hearings revealed that the company hired Lockheed Martin to spy on workers involved in organizing. The surveillance outfit contacted the FBI, ranked stores by degree of labor activity and solicited reports on conversations workers had. Walmart took actions against the most active workers, writing them up or “coaching” them for missing work, even though workers had notified the company they were going on strike.

Cruz was fired as a result of an accumulation of coachings.

At stores where the company fired or harassed workers, it must post and read aloud notices stating that protests such as strikes are protected activity and that workers who were disciplined for labor organizing may “act together with other employees for your benefit and protection,” said the NLRB ruling.

The findings by the judge will now be reviewed by the labor board. Walmart is expected to appeal. “We will pursue all of our options to defend the company because we believe our actions were legal and justified,” company spokesperson Kory Lundberg told Reuters.

— Laura Garza

25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO

THE MILITANT

A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

February 15, 1991

The recent announcement by New York’s *Daily News* that it could close down by March 20, poses a challenge to the labor movement and all working people to step up solidarity with members of the nine unions locked out by the newspaper some three months ago.

The decision by the *Daily News* to send out official notification to its workforce is the latest indication that efforts by the Chicago-based Tribune Company to defeat the union by running the newspaper with scabs is failing. Support continues for the 2,300 unionists’ battle to resist the bosses’ demands for concessions. Working people in massive numbers throughout the New York area still refuse to buy the daily.

Despite efforts by the bosses to violence-bait the strike and terrorize strikers with gun thugs, the *Daily News* has been unable to shake the solid support the unionists have gained.

THE MILITANT

PUBLISHED WEEKLY IN THE INTERESTS OF THE WORKING PEOPLE

February 14, 1966

BERKELEY, Calif., Feb. 9 — Between four and five thousand students at the University of California here walked out of classes this afternoon to attend a rally against the [Vietnam] war.

The walk-out climaxed three days of intensive antiwar activity at the Berkeley campus. On Monday and Tuesday, students attempted to turn their classrooms into discussions on the war. Four hundred teaching assistants voted to endorse this plan for classroom discussions, and they were held in over one-third of the classes.

The Vietnam Day Committee, which organized all of the activities, prepared a packet of literature on the war, which was passed out to the students.

The VDC has held rallies almost every day for the past week, of 500 to 1,000 students. The administration claims this is a violation of the rules about speakers.

THE MILITANT

Official Weekly Organ of the Socialist Workers Party

February 15, 1941

HAVANA, Cuba — In a sweeping decree promulgated on January 30, the “democratic” government of Col. Fulgencio Batista illegalized all international organizations and annulled the democratic liberties guaranteed by the constitution. Severe penalties are provided for those carrying on revolutionary propaganda and agitation.

Ostensibly aimed at “organizations, centers and individuals who endeavor in their activities to propagate totalitarian political ideals,” the decree in reality is directed against the political and trade union organizations of the working class, especially those of a revolutionary character. Even the Communist Party, which has been a loyal lackey of Batista, and still vociferously supports the government, is confronted with a none too bright future.

Trade Unions in the Epoch of Imperialist Decay

— LEON TROTSKY

Trotsky’s article “penetrates to the central question of unionism in our time: the need for ‘complete and unconditional independence of the trade unions in relation to the capitalist state.’”

— from introduction by Farrell Dobbs

INCLUDES: “Trade Unions: Their Past, Present and Future” by Karl Marx

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TRADE UNIONS

In the epoch of imperialist decay by Leon Trotsky

PREFACE BY FARRELL DOBBS

\$16

Trade unions: their past, present and future by Karl Marx

INTRODUCTION BY FARRELL DOBBS

THE MILITANT

Texas rally challenges law restricting abortion access

BY NAOMI CRAINE

Hundreds of defenders of women's right to choose abortion rallied at the Texas Capitol in Austin Jan. 22, marking the 43rd anniversary of the Roe v. Wade Supreme Court ruling decriminalizing abortion. The action also kicked off a statewide "Fight Back Texas Truth Tour" to mobilize support leading up to a March 2 U.S. Supreme Court hearing on whether a 2013 state law that has forced many abortion clinics to close is constitutional.

The Texas law, known as HB2, is one of hundreds that have been passed in recent years designed to force abortion providers to close through "deceptive, medically unnecessary regulations, such as saying a clinic has to meet the standards of an ambulatory surgical center," said Heather Busby, executive director of NARAL Pro-Choice Texas, in a phone interview Feb. 1.

Since 2013 more than half of the over 40 facilities that provided abortions in Texas have closed. If the Supreme Court upholds Texas' restrictions on abortion, only 10 will be able to remain open, making it harder for working-class and rural women to have access to the procedure.

Rallies and other actions will take place across Texas Feb. 5-12 to "amplify the voices of women on the impact that lack of access to abortion has, and demonstrate the support that exists for the right to choose," Busby said. Supporters of women's rights will rally on the steps of the Supreme Court in Washington, D.C., when the court hears oral arguments in the case.

On Jan. 22 a 7-7 split vote in the Kansas Court of Appeals let stand a lower court ruling blocking a state law that would have banned the most common second-trimester abortion procedure. A similar ban in Oklahoma was blocked by courts there last year. Both rulings held the restrictions violated their state's constitution.

In January the U.S. Supreme Court rejected appeals from officials in North Dakota and Arkansas trying to revive laws that would ban abortions as early as six to 12 weeks of pregnancy once a fetal heartbeat can be detected.

Under the reasoning of Roe v. Wade and subsequent Supreme court rulings, states cannot ban abortion in the first trimester of pregnancy, but can regulate access after that on grounds of protecting a woman's health. States can ban abortions after "viability," when the fetus can survive outside the womb. Under the Supreme Court decision, that was considered to be after 24 weeks of pregnancy, but several state governments, including Texas, now ban abortions after 20 weeks.

On Jan. 25 a Houston grand jury indicted two opponents of abortion rights who secretly recorded, and then selectively edited, videos they claimed showed that Planned Parenthood illegally sold fetal tissue.

Texas Gov. Greg Abbott ordered a criminal investigation of Planned Parenthood in July based on the videos

released by the cynically named Center for Medical Progress, organized by abortion opponent David Daleiden.

The grand jury found no illegal conduct by Planned Parenthood. Instead, it filed felony charges of "tampering with a governmental record" against Daleiden and Sandra Merritt, alleging they used fake driver's licenses to pose as representatives of a fake company trying to obtain tissue donations for medical research. Daleiden was also indicted for making an illegal "offer to buy human organs, namely fetal tissue" as part of his attempt to entrap Planned Parenthood.

Even though investigations in Texas and 11 other states have found no evidence of any illegal act by any Planned Parenthood affiliate, opponents of women's rights have taken advantage of the cavalier tone of some of the doctors and administrators Daleiden recorded to make headway in their anti-abortion campaign. Officials in Texas and elsewhere have used the videos as an excuse to cut off funding for all health care services provided by Planned Parenthood, including birth control and HIV testing.

Putin invokes czars, Stalin to intervene in 'near abroad'

Continued from front page

integrity, sovereignty and political independence of Ukraine" were "unacceptable."

When the workers and farmers came to power in Russia in the October 1917 Bolshevik revolution, the old czarist empire was what Lenin aptly called a "prison house of nations." In September 1922, Stalin proposed absorbing the independent republics of Ukraine, Belorussia, Azerbaijan, Georgia and Armenia into the Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic.

Lenin's final fight

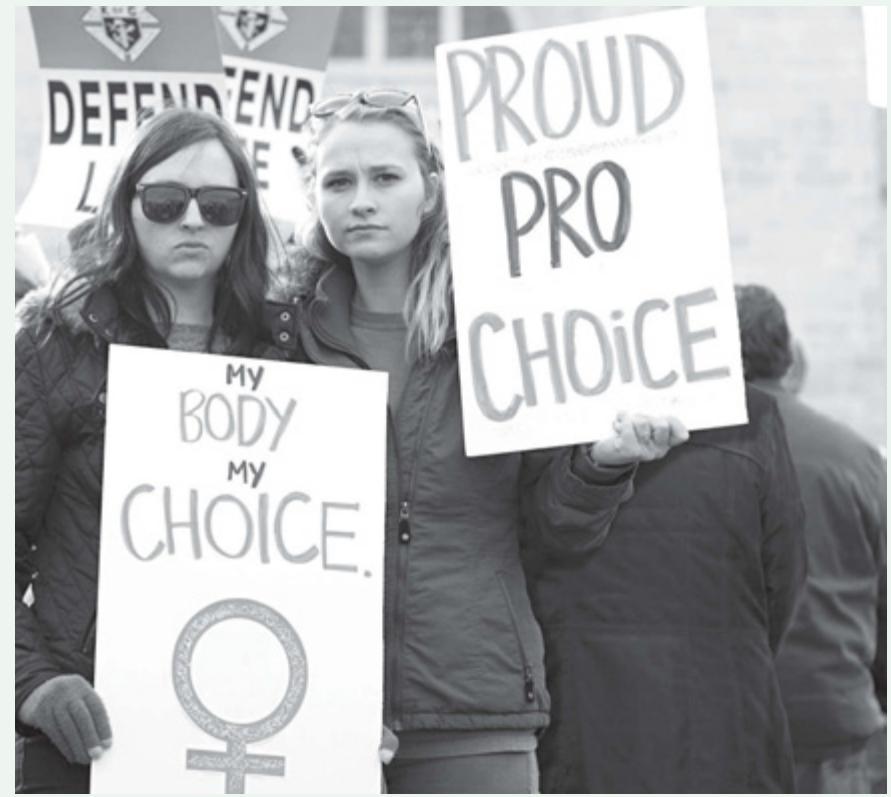
"We consider ourselves, the Ukrainian SSR, and others equal," Lenin argued, and must "enter with them on an equal basis into a new union, a new federation, the Union of the Soviet Republics of Europe and Asia."

The record of this debate, in which Stalin derided the "national liberalism of Comrade Lenin," can be found in *Lenin's Final Fight*, published by Pathfinder Press. The Socialist Workers Party traces its political continuity to Lenin and the early years of the Russian Revolution and stands on Lenin's legacy in this fight. It is the only road to unite working people in struggle.

Writing a couple months later about the necessity of combating Great Russian chauvinism inherited from the czars, Lenin said, "Internationalism on the part of oppressors or 'great' nations, as they are called (though they are great only in their violence ...), must consist not only in the observance of the formal equality of nations but even in an inequality, through which the oppressor nation, the great nation, would compensate for the inequality which obtains in real life."

The political course led by Lenin

Protest in Nebraska defends abortion rights



Morgan Beal

LINCOLN, Neb. — Some 50 supporters of women's right to abortion stood their ground to counterprotest an annual anti-abortion rally of 3,000 outside the state Capitol here Jan. 30. The majority of pro-choice supporters were young women from Lincoln high schools and the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

"I came because I support and defend a woman's right to choose abortion, and I support the \$15 an hour for a minimum wage movement," Chris Steffen, 55, a Lincoln factory worker, told the *Militant*. "Women's organizations and the unions should organize and be out here by the thousands joining together against the attacks on our rights and working conditions."

— JOE SWANSON

was crushed as part of the counter-revolution against the working class carried out in 1920s and '30s by the bureaucratic caste that consolidated under Stalin. The USSR became not a voluntary union, but an oppressive "Soviet" superstate in which patriotism was used to justify the resurgence of Great Russian chauvinism. Whole peoples — like the Crimean Tatars in 1944 — were deported from their homelands at gunpoint. It was this course that made it inevitable the re-imposed prison house of nations would break apart.

Speaking in Stavropol, Putin also sought to smear Lenin and the revolution as brutal, unpatriotic and a disaster for "Mother Russia." Bemoaning the fall of the czarist empire, he complains that the Bolsheviks "lost" World War I "to a losing nation," saying it caused "colossal losses" for Moscow in territories surrendered. This refers to the Bolsheviks' decision to sign the onerous 1918 Brest-Litovsk peace treaty with Berlin to defend the revolution from being overthrown.

Among other contributions to the working class worldwide, the Bolshevik leadership exposed the secret

treaties that had been drawn up between the imperialist rulers in London and Paris — and the czarist regime in Moscow — to carve up the world among themselves, the real aim of the war.

"Everyone accused the tsarist regime of repressions," Putin added. "However what did Soviet power begin with? With mass repressions." As evidence he cited the killing in 1918 of the former czar and his family. He accused the Bolsheviks of murdering Russian Orthodox priests, as he seeks today to bolster the church's hierarchy as a cornerstone of his regime's rule.

Putin praised the "concentration of national resources" under Stalin, a euphemism for the forced collectivization, murder of political opponents and consolidation of a massive police apparatus in the 1930s. Without this, he said, Moscow would have risked "catastrophic consequences for our statehood" in World War II.

Putin's goal is to justify his course today as he seeks to stabilize Russian capitalism, win working-class subservience and sacrifice in the name of greater Russia, and extend its grip over the "near abroad."

Lenin's Final Fight Speeches and Writings, 1922-23

"As capitalism in the twenty-first century enters its deepest economic and social crisis since the decades spanning the first and second imperialist world wars, programmatic and strategic matters in dispute in the communist workers movement in the early 1920s once again weigh heavily in prospects for the working class worldwide to advance along its historic line of march toward the conquest of power."

— from the Introduction

\$20, also in Spanish, Greek

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'In Cuba, a prisoner is another human being'

Cuban Five: It's different in US prisons, where the system is organized to dehumanize you

"It's the Poor Who Face the Savagery of the US 'Justice' System": The Cuban Five Talk About Their Lives Within the US Working Class, is a new book from Pathfinder. It centers on a 2015 interview by Mary-Alice Waters and Roger Calero with the Cuban Five in Havana. Each was incarcerated in the U.S. from 14 to 16 years after the FBI framed them up for activity in defense of the Cuban Revolution. The excerpt below follows a discussion on how the capitalist rulers foster the prevalence of drugs and gangs in U.S. prisons. Copyright © 2016 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.

MARY-ALICE WATERS: We've had some experiences here in Cuba that are the opposite of what you've been describing. We have a friend in Matanzas, for example, a university professor who also gives classes in prison and takes pride in it. She told us about using some books Pathfinder has published in her classes and the interest they generate. We've read about Silvio Rodríguez and other musicians giving concerts inside the prisons....

We know things in Cuba are far from perfect. But social relations — the way people relate to each other — are the opposite of what you experienced in the US. And that's true in the prison system too. In Cuba the revolution carried out by the workers and farmers eliminated the economic and social system built on class exploitation, on retribution and punishment, social isolation, punitive deprivation of medical care, denial of culture and education. That's why the US government is so determined to punish the Cuban people and destroy your example.

GERARDO HERNÁNDEZ: We were with many Cuban prisoners in the United States who had been inmates in Cuba as well.... They'd often say, "Yes, material conditions in prison" — especially in the newer ones — "are a lot better than where I was in Cuba."

Obviously you can't compare living conditions in the richest country in the world with the economic resources in Cuba. But most of them recognized that prison personnel here in Cuba make a real effort to rehabilitate inmates, to help them. In the United States, a prison counselor is someone who puts in his hours at work and does his best not to ever have to see you....

The human part is essential. I often give the example of a young neighbor of mine. When he was in high school, he was involved in something that rarely happens in Cuba — what's known in the US as "bullying." He was studying in the countryside on a scholarship program and he was being pestered and harassed. One day he took a knife, scuffled with the other boy, and stabbed him in the wrong place, killing him.

That boy was sentenced to seven years. During that time he completed high school and went on to university.... He took classes all day, and the bus brought him back to prison....

I recently had a conversation with a very prestigious young artist here in Cuba, Mabel Poblet. She showed me some samples of her work. One stood out to me — an installation with hun-



Above, prisoners in Combinado del Este prison in Guanabacoa, Cuba, during class in prison library, April 2013. Right, California protest in July that year supporting hunger strikers fighting solitary confinement, inhuman treatment.



dreds of red plastic flowers. "Look at these flowers," she said. "They were made by a woman who is a prisoner in Holguín."

"We visited the women's prison there and met an inmate, Betsy Torres, who was making flowers," Mabel said. "I had in mind doing an installation using flowers, so I asked her to make some for me — the ones you see here. After she was let out for good behavior, I invited her to the opening of my exhibition."

This type of exchange is the opposite of the dehumanization that takes place in the US prison system....

FERNANDO GONZÁLEZ: Look at what the Bureau of Prisons calls its Program Statement. It says the Bureau of Prisons encourages social contact with the outside. But in practice it's the opposite. They put up obstacles to everything, including visits.

It's not enough that the prisoner is 1,500 miles or more from his family. It's not enough that many families can't afford a plane ticket and a weekend in a motel to come see you. On top of all that, the searches and other alienating procedures family members and friends have to go through to get into the prison, not to mention the tense, uncomfortable layout of the visiting room....

GERARDO HERNÁNDEZ: "The most important difference, what I miss most," some Cuban inmates in the US would tell us, "is that in Cuba I had the right to conjugal visits, or to get a pass to see my family." But not in the United States.

In federal prisons and in all but four of the fifty states, something so elementary as conjugal visits are not permitted. If they were, it would greatly reduce tensions. It would humanize people. It would be an incentive for good behavior....

RAMÓN LABAÑINO: They don't care whether there's money in the budget for another handball court. That's a big issue I had, since — in addition to reading, studying, and playing chess — sports was one of the ways I handled all those years in prison. I exercised, lifted weights, and played lots of handball. But prison officials didn't want to paint the floor of the handball court with the kind of rubber compound that makes it easier on your knees.

That's how I injured my knee, in fact. But medical care in prison in the US is terrible; they don't want to spend money on that either. I went to the doctor and he told me, "Take two aspirin. Put ice on it, keep your feet up, and tomorrow you'll be better." They only really take care of you when you're on the verge of dying....

There's money in the budget to buy better food for the cafeteria too, but it's never fully used. I know. I worked in the cafeteria several times.

Actually, I didn't like working in the cafeteria, because a lot of people take those jobs in order to steal food. But we don't steal. It's not our philosophy, not the social values we learned in Cuba. With what I ate I had enough. Frankly, I'm no good at stealing.

Here in Cuba it's different. Our officers may not have resources, but they are trained to really help you. I'd venture to say that ethic goes far beyond the framework of the prison system to the

broader society here.

In Cuba a prisoner is another human being. He's someone who made a mistake and is in prison for that reason. It's not like the US, where the prison population is the enemy — just as uniformed officers there see the people as the enemy. Why? Because on some level they understand there could be a social revolution in the United States some day. And their job is to contain that revolution, in order to protect the social layer that's in power.

That's pretty elementary. You don't even need Marxism-Leninism to see that. But if you don't understand this, you'll never see why things happen the way they do in the United States. Why the police act the way they did in Ferguson, Missouri, last year. Why there's no solution within that system....

FERNANDO GONZÁLEZ: In Miami we saw women who were pregnant when they were arrested. When the time came to give birth, they were taken to the hospital....

RAMÓN LABAÑINO: . . . in chains.

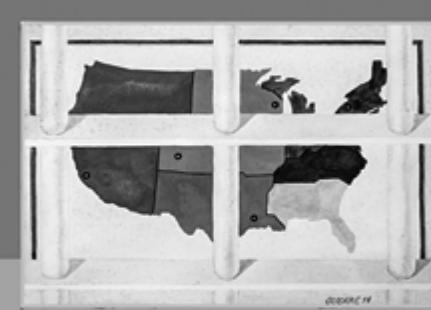
FERNANDO GONZÁLEZ: Yes, *in chains*. They gave birth in the hospital, and two days later they were brought back to their cells without their baby.

Recently I visited a women's prison here in Cuba. . . . In the United States, you know from miles away you're near a prison. You see the walls, fences, razor wire, towers, lights, surveillance vehicles. But in Guantánamo, as we got closer, I asked, "Where's the prison?" There was a wall you could easily jump over. Even as fat as I am, I could have jumped over it!

Inside, some rooms are like small apartments. If a woman is pregnant — or becomes pregnant, because they have conjugal visits — she can stay in one of those rooms until the baby is a year old. It's a small room with a kitchen, where she can cook. The prison provides food for the baby and other necessities. There's also a sewing shop.

Just released... \$15 — Place your order now!

THE CUBAN FIVE talk about their lives within the US working class



"It's the poor who face the savagery of the US 'justice' system"

Includes 40 photos from their years in prison and since the Cuban Five won their freedom and returned to Cuba.

"They chose five distant points for us to serve our unjust sentences. . . . But nothing could stop the Five from marching together with our people and our supporters the world over in the long battle for freedom."

—Antonio Guerrero

Five Cuban revolutionaries, framed up by the U.S. government in 1998, spent from 14 to 16 years as part of the U.S. working class behind bars. Each reached out to fellow prisoners with respect, solidarity, and through their own example — and won respect and support in return.

What prepared the Cuban Five to act as each did? Above all, it was Cuba's socialist revolution, whose class character and values their conduct exemplifies. With understanding, objectivity and humor, in this 2015 interview they talk about U.S. capitalist society and its "justice" system. And about the future of the Cuban Revolution.

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Sankara: ‘You cannot kill ideas — a tribute to Che Guevara’

Thomas Sankara Speaks: The Burkina Faso Revolution 1983-1987 is one of Pathfinder’s Books of the Month for February. Under Sankara’s leadership, the revolutionary government mobilized peasants, workers, craftsmen, women and youth to carry out literacy and immunization campaigns, to sink wells, plant trees, build housing and begin to transform their oppressive and exploitative condition and, in the process, themselves. Sankara looked to the Cuban Revolution as the preeminent example of revolutionary struggle. The excerpt “You Cannot Kill Ideas: A Tribute to Che Guevara” was presented at the 1987 opening of an exhibition honoring the Cuban revolutionary leader, killed 20 years earlier in Bolivia. A week later, Sankara was assassinated and the revolutionary government overthrown. Copyright © 1988 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.

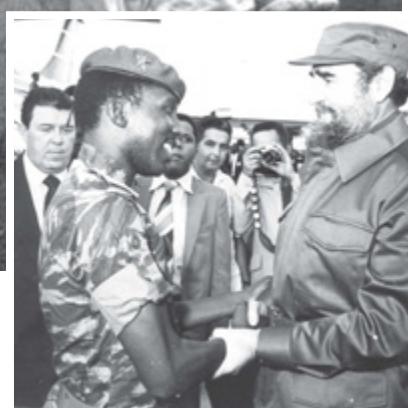
BOOKS OF THE MONTH

BY THOMAS SANKARA

We’ve come this morning, in a modest way, to open this exhibition that seeks to trace the life and work of Che. At the same time, we want to tell the whole world today that for us Che Guevara is not dead. Because throughout the world there are centers of struggle where people strive for more freedom, more dignity, more justice, and more



Above, left, Che Guevara, with fellow combatant in Congo in 1965, where Cuban volunteers joined rebels in fight against colonial rule. “From the north to the south, Africa remembers Che,” said Thomas Sankara, inset, left, with Fidel Castro in Havana 1984.



happiness. Throughout the world, people are fighting against oppression and domination; against colonialism, neocolonialism, and imperialism; and against class exploitation.

Dear friends, we join our voices with everyone in the world who remembers that one day a man called Che Guevara ... his heart filled with faith, took up the struggle alongside other men and, in so doing, succeeded in creating a spark that powerfully disturbed the forces of occupation in the world.

We simply want to say that a new era in Burkina Faso has come, a new reality is on the march in our country. That’s how Che Guevara’s call to action must be understood — Che, who wanted to light fires of struggle throughout the world.

Che Guevara was cut down by bullets, imperialist bullets, under Bolivian skies. And we say that for us, Che Guevara is not dead.

One of the beautiful phrases often recalled by revolutionaries, by the great Cuban revolutionaries, is the one that Che’s friend, his companion in struggle, his comrade, his brother, Fidel Castro himself repeated. He heard it from the mouth of a man of the people one day during the struggle — one of Batista’s officers who, despite being part of that reactionary, repressive army, managed to connect with the forces fighting for the well-being of the Cuban people. Right after the assault on the Moncada garrison had failed, when those who had attempted it were about to be put to

death by the guns of Batista’s army — they were going to be shot — the officer said simply, “Don’t shoot, you cannot kill ideas.”

It’s true, you cannot kill ideas. Ideas do not die. That’s why Che Guevara, an embodiment of revolutionary ideas and self-sacrifice, is not dead. You have come here today [from Cuba], and we draw inspiration from you.

Che Guevara, an Argentine according to his passport, became an adopted Cuban through the blood and sweat he shed for the Cuban people. He became, above all, a citizen of the free world — the free world that we’re building together. That’s why we say that Che Guevara is also African and Burkinabé.

Che Guevara called his beret *la boina*. He made that beret and its star known almost everywhere in Africa. From the north to the south, Africa remembers Che Guevara.

Bold young people — young people thirsting for dignity, thirsting for courage, thirsting also for ideas and for the vitality he symbolized in Africa — sought out Che Guevara in order to drink from the source, the invigorating source represented in the world by this revolutionary captain. Some of the few who had the opportunity and honor of being in Che’s presence, and who are still alive, are here among us today.

Che is Burkinabé. He is Burkinabé because he participates in our struggle. He is Burkinabé because his ideas inspire us and are inscribed in our Political Orientation Speech. He is Burkinabé

because his star is stamped on our banner. He is Burkinabé because some of his ideas live in each of us in the daily struggle we wage.

Che is a man, but a man who knew how to show us and teach us that we can dare to have confidence in ourselves and our abilities. Che is among us.

What is Che, I’d like to ask? Che, to us, is above all conviction, revolutionary conviction, revolutionary faith in what you’re doing, the conviction that victory belongs to us, and that struggle is our only recourse.

Che is also a sense of humanity. Humanity — this expression of generosity and self-sacrifice that made Che not only an Argentine, Cuban, and internationalist combatant, but also a man, with all the warmth of a man.

Che is also, and above all, demanding. The demanding character of one who had the good fortune to be born into a well-to-do family... Yet he was able to say no to those temptations, to turn his back on the easy road in order, on the contrary, to assert himself as a man of the people, a man who makes common cause with the people, a man who makes common cause with the suffering of others. Che’s demanding character is what should inspire us the most.

Conviction, humanity, a demanding character — all this makes him Che. Those who are capable of mustering these virtues within themselves, those who are capable of mustering these qualities within themselves — this conviction, this humanity, and this demanding character — they can say that they are like Che — men among men, but, above all, revolutionaries among revolutionaries....

Comrades, I would finally like to express my joy that we have been able to immortalize Che’s ideas here in Ouagadougou by naming this street after Che Guevara.

Every time we think of Che, let’s try to be like him, and make this man, the combatant, live again. And especially, every time we think of acting in his spirit of self-sacrifice, by rejecting material goods that seek to alienate us, by refusing to take the easy road, by turning instead to education and the rigorous discipline of revolutionary morality — every time we try to act in this way, we will better serve Che’s ideas, we will spread them more effectively.

Homeland or death, we will win!

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SOCIALIST WORKERS PARTY STATEMENT

Protest gov't killing of Robert Finicum!

The following statement was issued Feb. 3 by John Studer, Socialist Workers Party national campaign director.

The Socialist Workers Party condemns the Jan. 26 killing of Robert "LaVoy" Finicum by Oregon State Police and the FBI in what can only be described as an assassination. We demand that the cops involved be charged and prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law.

Finicum was one of the ranchers and others occupying the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge near Burns, Oregon, over the last month. He, occupation leader Ammon Bundy and a few others were on their way to a community meeting in John Day. The FBI claims that following a "traffic stop" Finicum fled and was reaching for a gun. Cops and government police agencies often use this charge to justify cold-blooded killings, including "finding" a weapon when the victim doesn't have one.

This was no traffic stop, it was a premeditated assault. The FBI and state police closed off more than 50 miles of highway, set up roadblocks, and deployed snipers and a surveillance plane. After shooting Finicum, the cops shot up his vehicle, with three passengers still inside, including with flash grenades and pepper spray. They ignored Finicum's need for medical attention for at least 10 minutes as he lay dying in the snow.

This echoes the callous disregard for cattle rancher Jack Yantis Nov. 1 when sheriff's deputies in Adams County, Idaho, refused him medical aid when they shot him after calling him to come put down one of his

bulls when it was hit by a car. They handcuffed Yantis' wife and nephew to prevent them from coming to his aid as he lay bleeding on the ground.

Protests have demanded the cops be charged in both killings. At recent actions in Oregon participants chanted, "Ranchers lives matter" and "All lives matter." This shows the widespread impact of the explosive fight against police killings of Blacks and others, including Michael Brown, Eric Garner, Tamir Rice, Mario Martinez, Zachary Hammond, which has forced the rulers to place some restraints on their cops.

In the wake of the killing of Finicum, ranchers and working people in Harney County, Oregon, are redoubling their efforts to fight for freedom for Dwight and Steven Hammond, two local cattle ranchers framed up and imprisoned twice on the same arson charges, for controlled burns to protect their ranch from invasive plants and wildfires, a common practice in the region. After serving their original sentences in full, the government used the 1996 Antiterrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act to send them back to jail for more time.

Washington and cops at every level across the country are the greatest perpetrators of terror — from Waco, Texas, to the deadly assault on MOVE in Philadelphia, to Vietnam, Iraq and the nuclear bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

We urge the labor movement and all those who have been fighting for justice for working people killed by the cops to join in demanding, "Free the Hammonds! Jail the cops who killed Robert Finicum!"

Washington-Moscow bloc hits hurdles in Syria

Continued from front page

Reuters reported.

The developments reflect the challenges before Washington, Moscow and Tehran as they work together in an effort to stop the fighting and introduce some stability in the area hoping to defend their national interests. Washington is willing to let the Bashar al-Assad regime stand, including with Assad in place, at least for a while, to accomplish the goal. Then they hope to collaborate on pushing back the Islamic State forces in both Syria and Iraq.

Forging this bloc was the goal of the Barack Obama administration's drive to implement its nuclear deal with Tehran.

The problem they face is the conflicting interests of capitalist regimes in the region, including Turkey, Saudi Arabia and other Middle East majority Sunni monarchies, Iraq and the varying forces in Syria itself.

As a price for attending the talks, the Higher Negotiation Committee, representing 17 opposition groups, demanded the regime stop bombarding civilian areas, lift blockades on 22 besieged cities where starvation is rampant and release political prisoners.

The senior opposition negotiator is Riyad Hijab, a longtime member of Assad's Baathist Party and former prime minister who joined the opposition in 2012.

Meanwhile, Islamic State claimed responsibility for a triple bombing near Syria's holiest Shia shrine in Damascus Jan. 31 that killed more than 45 people.

Syrian Kurds excluded

The Syrian Kurdish Democratic Union Party (PYD) was excluded from negotiations at the insistence of Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, although de Mistura reportedly invited some Kurdish allies to advise him in Geneva.

Ankara fears the growing confidence of 30 million Kurds in the region demanding autonomy, and has led a bloody military assault in the country's majority-Kurdish southeast, a stronghold of the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK). The Turkish government labels both the PKK and the PYD terrorists. The PYD's military wing, the Kurdish People's Protection Units (YPG) has shown themselves a force to reckon with. They've driven Islamic State forces out of northern Syria and control two-thirds of the border with Turkey.

When mass, popular demonstrations rocked the country in 2011 calling for the end to Assad's repres-

sive rule, the Syrian government responded with poison gas, killings and bombed cities into rubble where the opposition had support.

Decades of collaboration with capitalist forces by Stalinist parties in the region have left a situation where no independent revolutionary working-class movement exists capable of leading the toilers to power. In the context of the growing war, Islamic State stepped into the vacuum and seized a wide swath of territory in Syria and Iraq.

In return for Putin's help in establishing stability in the region and curtailing Islamic State, Washington and its allies are easing punishing sanctions and backing off from criticizing Moscow's intervention in Ukraine. The goal of Putin and the Russian capitalist class he represents is for a free hand in Moscow's "near abroad," a place in Mideast politics, access to a Mediterranean port in Syria and the weakening of Islamist forces that could threaten Moscow's control over Chechnya.

Refugee crisis in Europe grows

The war makes life for workers and farmers in Syria intolerable, with destruction everywhere, the economy ruined and millions displaced, living in refugee camps in neighboring countries or heading for Europe.

In Germany, where more than a million refugees arrived last year, Chancellor Angela Merkel's government announced it will tighten asylum policies.

The Swedish and Finnish governments said they will gradually deport tens of thousands of asylum seekers there.

European Union officials, assailing the Greek government for not enforcing stringent border controls, threaten to "ringfence" the country to prevent migrants from leaving. Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras warned that this would turn near-bankrupt Greece into a "black box" of homeless refugees.

Thirty Syrian refugees have been rejected by Washington recently, Leon Rodriguez, an Obama administration official, told the House of Representatives Homeland Security Committee Feb. 3. Hundreds of other applications have been put on hold, as the government tightens scrutiny.

Imperialist rulers from Paris to Washington have used sporadic terror attacks by local supporters of Islamic State to scapegoat Muslims, encouraging threats and attacks against Arabs and mosques.

Sanders, Trump

Continued from front page

Clinton, once considered a shoo-in for the Democratic Party nomination, is now scrambling to counter Sanders by presenting herself as the practical way to carry out his platform. In her "victory" speech in Iowa, where she beat Sanders by a hair, Clinton declared, "I am a progressive, who gets things done."

The editors of the *New York Times* and *Washington Post* came out in support of Clinton in the days leading up to the Iowa vote. "Bernie Sanders's Fiction-Filled Campaign," was the headline on the *Post* editorial Jan. 27, which accused him of promoting "fantastical claims" while "playing the role of uncorrupted anti-establishment crusader."

"It's the establishment view," responded Jane Sanders, political adviser and wife of Bernie Sanders, in an interview on MSNBC Jan. 29. They say "anything that is bold is not doable. We just disagree."

Jane Sanders also took issue with a commentator who compared her husband's campaign to 1972, when George McGovern, riding the crest of anti-Vietnam War sentiment, secured the Democratic Party nomination but lost in a landslide to Richard Nixon. The better analogy is to 1932, she said, when Franklin Delano Roosevelt won the presidency during the Great Depression. "People were looking for bold leadership and that's happening now." Roosevelt's "New Deal" was a package of reforms to rescue capitalism from collapse and thwart rising labor militancy from growing into independent working-class political action.

Under the impact of depression conditions facing workers, Trump has been gaining support within both the Republican and Democratic parties. A recent study by AFL-CIO affiliate Working America of households in working-class neighborhoods outside Cleveland and Pittsburgh said that while a little over half of voters were undecided, 38 percent who had made up their minds backed Trump. The next highest share was 22 percent for Clinton.

Officials from the 2 million member Service Employees International Union endorsed Clinton in November. But Trump is gaining a hearing among some of its members. "There is deep economic anxiety among our members and the people we're trying to organize that I believe Donald Trump's message is tapping into," SEIU President Mary Kay Henry told the *Times* Jan. 29.

Former New York Mayor Michael Bloomberg is considering throwing his hat into the ring as a so-called independent. If it looks like Trump or Cruz will win the Republican primary and Sanders is the Democratic nominee, Bloomberg "has told allies he would be likely to run," reported the *New York Times*. He has set a deadline for early March to decide after results from some of the primaries are in.

Bloomberg, who served as New York mayor from 2002 to 2013, was in the forefront of leading the bosses' drive against workers' rights and living conditions in the city. He ran as a liberal Republican in 2001 and 2005 and four years later as an "independent," but was on the ballot line of the Republican party. During this time he toyed with the idea of running for president.

If he runs, Bloomberg plans to spend at least \$1 billion of his own funds, the *Times* reported, to get on the ballot in all 50 states. This is entirely different from what working-class parties face when trying to gain access to the ballot under the restrictive laws in many states.

Correction

The article titled, "Washington Joins Tehran, Moscow to Seek Syria Truce" in the Feb. 8 issue incorrectly quoted Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov speaking of "a political solution in Turkey." What he said was "a resolution in Syria."

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